

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5199

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG SHUM UN CI US ECLA
SUBJECT: HUNGER STRIKE AT ECLA ENDS

REF: A) USUN 1996, B) SANTIAGO 5029

1. ECLA DIRECTOR IGLESIAS HAS JUST INFORMED ME THAT THE
HUNGER STRIKE AT ECLA'S OFFICE IS OVER. THE CHILEAN
GOVERNMENT (GOC) PRESENTED AN AIDE MEMOIRE IN NEW YORK IN
REPLY TO UNSYG WALDHEIM'S MESSAGE, MAKING THE FOLLOWING POINTS
(ASSUME TEXT OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE IS AVAILABLE TO USUN):

-- THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE HAS BEEN CONTINUALLY CON-
CERNED ABOUT ALLEGED DISAPPEARED PERSONS AND HAS GIVEN INFOR-
MATION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, ITS WORKING GROUP,
THE RED CROSS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN
MIGRATION.

-- THERE ARE LEGAL PROCEDURES IN EFFECT WHICH CITIZENS
CAN USE TO PURSUE DISAPPEARANCES.

-- THE FACT THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE OCCURRED ON THE EVE
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OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SUPPORTING DEMON-
STRATIONS IN WASHINGTON PERMIT A CONCLUSION THAT THE
ACTION WAS AN ACT OF PRESSURE AGAINST THE CHILEAN
GOVERNMENT AND CLEAR POLITICAL AGITATION AND FAR FROM
HAVING A HUMANITARIAN CHARACTER.

-- FOR THESE REASONS THE GOC CONSIDERS A VISIT BY

A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNSYG WOULD ENHANCE THE POLITICAL NATURE OF THE SITUATION AND BE EXPLOITED AND BELIEVES IT INOPPORTUNE TO ACCEDE TO THE SUGGESTION.

-- THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL ENTERTAIN PROPER REQUESTS ON THE PART OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF PRESUMED DISAPPEARED PERSONS WHO WERE IN THE ECLA BUILDING AND WILL TRANSMIT THEM TO THE INTERIOR MINISTRY FOR ADEQUATE RESPONSE.

-- FINALLY, THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE DECLARES THAT IT HAS NOT ADOPTED REPRISALS AGAINST PERSONS WHO PURSUE THEIR DISSENT WITHIN LEGAL NORMS. IN THE CASE OF THE PERSONS NOW IN ECLA, THE GOC WILL NOT APPLY THE SANCTIONS OF THE LAW OF INTERNAL SECURITY OF THE STATE NOR THE MEASURES AUTHORIZED TO THE EXECUTIVE BY THE LAW OF THE STATE OF SEIGE FOR THE CRIMES WHICH ARE NOW OCCURRING IF THE SITUATION IS NORMALIZED WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD.

2. THE 26 DEMONSTRATORS ON BEHALF OF THEIR 36 DISAPPEARED RELATIVES ACCEPTED THE GOC POSITION AND ISSUED A STATEMENT OF THEIR OWN, AGREEING TO SUSPEND THE HUNGER STRIKE AND PEACEFULLY TO LEAVE THE ECLA BUILDING. THE STRIKERS THANKED WALDHEIM AND IGLESIAS FOR THEIR ATTITUDE, THANKED THE UN FOR OBTAINING PROMISES FOR AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THEIR LOVED ONES, EXPRESSED THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENCE IN THE GUARANTEE GIVEN BY THE GOC TO THE UN CONCERNING THEIR PERSONAL SECURITY, EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT PROGRESS WILL BE MADE IN FINDING OUT THE DESTINY OF OTHERS WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED, AND REITERATED THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS NOT POLITICALLY INSPIRED.

3. ECLA'S INFORMATION SERVICE DISTRIBUTED A PRESS RELEASE SAYING THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS OVER AS OF NOON TODAY AND THAT THE STRIKERS HAVE AGREED TO ABANDON THE BUILDING PEACEFULLY.

4. IGLESIAS IS AMAZEED, AS ARE WE, BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS A MEDIA NON-EVENT. IGLESIAS SPECULATES THAT, IN A WORLD IN WHICH ALMOST DAILY A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OR A BUSINESSMAN IS KIDNAPPED OR KILLED, A WORLD IN WHICH PERIODICALLY HUNDREDS OF INNOCENT ARE SKYJACKED OR TRAPPED ON TRAINS, A HUNGER STRIKE CONNECTED WITH TRAGEDIES THAT ARE MONTHS OR YEARS OLD SIMPLY DOESN'T MAKE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION.

5. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THAT IGLESIAS DESERVES A GOOD

DEAL OF CREDIT FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE SIT-IN,
BOTH BY VIRTUE OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE GOC-UN
NEGOTIATION AND BECAUSE HE DID NOT ALLOW THE MEDIA
TO ENTER ECLA HEADQUARTERS AND TURN THE DEMONSTRATION
INTO A CIRCUS. WE NOTE THAT SUY FOLLOWED THE SAME
POLICY BY REFUSING TO FACILITATE A PRESS CONFERENCE BY
THE GROUP IN WASHINGTON WHO ARE ENGAGED IN A SUPPORTING
SIT-IN (PARA 5, REF A).

6. THE 26 HUNGER STRIKERS ACCEPTED A GOOD DEAL LESS
THAN HALF A LOAF REGARDING AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT
HAPPENED TO THEIR DISAPPEARED RELATIVES. WITHOUT
QUESTIONING THE MOTIVES OF THE RELATIVES OF THE
DISAPPEAREDS, THE TIMING AND THE TERMS OF THE RESOLU-
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TION OF THE HUNGER STRIKE LEAD US TO THE CONCLUSION
THAT THE MOTIVE OF THE STRIKE MANAGERS (AS OPPOSED
TO THE STRIKERS THEMSELVES) WAS POLITICAL. THE HUNGER
STRIKERS OCCUPIED ECLA ON THE EVE OF THE OAS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY; ON THE EVE OF THE RELEASE OF JORGE MONTES,
THE GOC'S LAST KNOWN PRISONER DETAINED UNDER THE STATE
OF SEIGE; AND ON THE EVE OF THE RELEASE OF 11 POLITICAL
PRISONERS BY A COMMUNIST COUNTRY, THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC. NOW THAT THE MINISTERIAL STARS HAVE LEFT
GRENADA, THE OASGA HAS ENTERED ITS PARLIAMENTARY
MANEUVER STAGE, AND THE MONTES/GERMAN POLITICAL PRISONER
EXCHANGE HAS BEEN CONSUMMATED, THE STRIKE IS RESOLVED
WITH RELATIVE EASE. IT LEAVES THE IMPRESSION OF POLITICAL
THEATER.
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